



STATE OF CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

**Testimony of the Honorable Barbara M. Quinn, Chief Court Administrator and
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Branch**

**Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
February 23, 2011**

Raised Bill 6313, An Act Concerning Intensive Probation Supervision

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, Senator Doyle, Representative Holder-Winfield, Senator Kissel, Representative Hetherington and members of the Judiciary Committee. We are here today to speak in support of **Raised Bill 6313, *An Act Concerning Intensive Probation Supervision***. The bill would expand the duties of an adult probation officer to include supervising new populations of individuals who would otherwise be incarcerated, but instead will be monitored by a new Intensive Probation Supervision Unit.

This bill results from a request last spring from legislative leaders that the Judicial Branch submit recommendations on how our probation system can be used more effectively to achieve savings related to prison costs. To respond to this request, we collaborated with the Departments of Correction, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Defender Services, and we also consulted with the Chief State's Attorney's office to gain their input in the development of recommendations. The conclusion of our efforts was the recommendation to establish Intensive Probation Supervision Units statewide to supervise and manage the new prison populations expected to be diverted.

The basic elements of the Intensive Probation Supervision Units include:

- Collaboration with the DOC, Public Defenders and DHMAS in screening and identifying appropriate defendants and inmates to be diverted;
- Very close monitoring of this population: a 25:1 probation officer to offender ratio to include frequent face-to-face contacts, collateral contacts, treatment contacts and employment checks;
- Priority access to outpatient mental health and substance abuse services; these offenders cannot be waitlisted; and
- Utilization of our electronic monitoring and GPS technology when necessary.

We based this model on the successfully implemented Probation Transition Program, which targets split sentence offenders leaving prison and coming into the probation system. Since its inception 5 years ago, we have seen dramatically reduced technical violation rates and very promising reductions in incarceration rates. In addition, we have seen overall a significant reduction in probation recidivism rates.

For the new Intensive Probation Supervision Units, we identified three potential diversion pools:

- The first group consists of pretrial detainees awaiting an approved treatment bed. These detainees often remain incarcerated for weeks and months and may ultimately spend their entire pretrial time in jail.
- The second group consists of convicted offenders who have a plea agreement of two years or less of prison time. With this group, the court may request from adult probation an “alternative sentencing plan” which will evaluate the appropriateness of offenders for placement in the Intensive Probation Supervision Unit in lieu of prison.
- The third group consists of incarcerated inmates serving 2 years or less but who have completed at least 90 days of their sentence. Inmates in full compliance with facility rules and treatment would be identified collaboratively by DOC and CSSD, and a sentence modification would be presented to the court for appropriate offenders, that would recommend intensive probation supervision in lieu of the remainder of the prison term.

The cumulative effect of the Intensive Probation Supervision Units, once fully implemented, may result in approximately 1,100 fewer persons incarcerated and significant cost savings to the state.

The funding for this program, including the needed probation officers and the services for the offenders, is in the Judicial Branch’s budget, as recommended by the governor. This bill is needed to provide the statutory authority for probation officers to fulfill the requirements of this program: for probation officers to supervise the pretrial detainees while they are awaiting a treatment bed; to submit the alternative sentencing plans to the court as required; and to petition the court for sentence modification. All three groups would be supervised and managed by the Intensive Probation Supervision Units.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to act favorably on this proposal to allow implementation of the Intensive Probation Supervision program. Thank you for your consideration.